



# DHS Today via E-Mail

June 18, 2004

## *Agency in a Healthy State of Mind*



Ever since Governor Huckabee announced his plan to make Arkansas healthier a few weeks ago, the buzz about health among DHS employees has not stopped. It's a constant stream of e-mails and phone calls; a few have even approached me in the restroom with questions, "What does this mean for employees?" "Will the organization pay for my fitness membership?" As you have seen by his example, Governor Huckabee is committed to this goal, so committed in fact he has lost more than 100 pounds through his own weight management program. In May, Governor Huckabee announced his plan to target state employees, Medicaid recipients and other Arkansans with healthy living. Part of the initiative, Huckabee directed the Department of Health to find ways to reduce obesity in adults and children as well as reduce smoking by as much as half the current rate. Huckabee also charged DHS to develop incentives for Medicaid recipients to participate in healthier behaviors. So, back to the original question, what does this mean to us in the DHS family? A group has been meeting weekly to address that very issue. Obviously the primary goal is to offer resources to help employees control weight and quit smoking but just as important is to offer opportunities to *all* employees across the state. Did I mention all the while utilizing existing resources? I think there is little question that we have undertaken quite a task. Perhaps you have heard talk of exercise "breaks" during the workday or discounts on health insurance. Here's what we know so far; the Employee Benefits Division within DF&A is working on a plan that will give insurance credits for certain healthy behaviors, i.e. quit smoking, physical activity. The department is also surveying counties across the state to see what resources exist in your local area that could help you build and maintain a healthy lifestyle. We'll keep you posted as plans evolve. If you have ideas about ways

to help all our employees live healthier lives, please e-mail them to [julie.munsell@arkansas.gov](mailto:julie.munsell@arkansas.gov). Being healthy is a choice, not a requirement, but it's a difficult choice and you should be rewarded for it.

### ***State Honors Volunteers*** ***Top Award to go to Country Music Icon***

DHS' Division of Volunteerism will honor volunteers statewide for service to their communities. Governor Huckabee will present the awards at a ceremony June 25<sup>th</sup> at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Little Rock. Individual winners are Bob Abbot of Pine Bluff, Shirley Davis of Little Rock, Flo & Dave Dietz of Hot Springs Village, Paul Hyatt of Benton, Wayne Ridings of Dardanelle, Rennie Tarpley of Conway, and Rodney Worthington of Little Rock. Daniel Cayce of Thornton was chosen as Youth Humanitarian of the year while Ellison Enterprises and Northrop Grumman Corporation will receive Corporation Humanitarian Awards. The top honor of the evening will be given to Bob Robbins, long-time Little Rock country music personality. Governor Huckabee will present Robbins with the Distinguished Citizen Award honoring Robbins for his work with Toys for Tots campaign. The ceremony can be seen live on KARK-TV beginning at 7 pm Friday.



## **DHS AROUND THE STATE**

### **Cereal Food Drive**

Division of Children and Family Services is participating in the Foodbank Cereal Drive hosted by the Arkansas Foodbank Network and today's THV. DCFS Central Unit is accepting unopened boxes of cereal to be distributed to needy families. Boxes are located in Donaghey Plaza South at the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Receptionist area and the on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor by the elevators. Last day to donate cereal is July 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **Division of Aging Hosts Leadership Training Academy**

Twenty-four Arkansans from across the state recently completed the first session of the Division of Aging and Adult Services' *Arkansas Aging and Disabilities Leadership Academy* (AADLA). Sessions are designed to train individuals to effectively communicate their message to local, state and federal policymakers. The Academy is unique because it places heavy emphasis on interagency relationships. One participant commented "I now have a great appreciation for others who might have seemed they were in another group, but they're not really." The first leadership class met monthly for six months. Participants were asked to fill out evaluations at the end of each weekend session. Results of the evaluations overwhelmingly showed that the presentations *exceeded* the expectations of most everyone. Comments such as "I feel real honored to be participating with this group and in this training...everything was great and beyond

my expectations" and "I think the content, instructors, and facilities were awesome" were included on the evaluation forms. A Real Choice Systems Change Grant from the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) funds the leadership academy. Created as a nationwide effort to remove barriers to community living for people with disabilities and long-term illnesses, the grants help states innovate enduring system changes service delivery that provides alternatives to institutional care.

## *Changes/Transitions*

Shelley Lee has been appointed as Superintendent of the Booneville Human Development Center



## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

**June 25<sup>th</sup>** - Community Service Awards, 6:30 p.m. Embassy Suites Ballroom

**June 28<sup>th</sup>** - Quranner Cotledge retirement celebration, 4:00-6:00pm, Best Inn, 2700 East Harding, Pine Bluff, AR

**June 29<sup>th</sup>** - (LR)Quranner Cotledge retirement celebration, 1:30-3:30pm, Donaghey Plaza South, Rm 5368

**July 5<sup>th</sup>** - State Holiday

## **A Final Thought....**

Imagine if your world were completely dark, and there were no switches to turn on to see a rainbow after a summer Arkansas rain or that captivating vista from a perch in the Ozark Mountains? As I sat in my office seemingly caving under the pressure of all the work yet to be done, I noticed a young man, his only guide a cane, exploring his new surroundings with his hands. How ironic that he would never even know that the beautiful artwork that hung behind him on the wall even existed. His concern is carving a single pathway to and from points in the building that are familiar to him so his travel is safe; the sadness that he must

travel that same path without deviation. I was pondering his tragedy when he found a familiar railing and a smile broke across his face. Then I thought of his bravery and how he tackles the unknown with a courage that I could never understand. How he hears every single note of music in a song that is only noise in the background of my world. And how spoken words to me are sometimes an infringement on my precious time and to him it's an artist's paintbrush, every stroke enabling him to compose a portrait in his mind's eye. Then I realize I am not more blessed than him because of sight, our gifts are just different and what we bring to this world is very individual. Then I catch his contagious smile and I'm reminded that beauty is found in everything, you just have to look for it and everyone has that capacity. Note for the day.....look for the beauty.



Do you have something you'd like to share in the newsletter?  
Send e-mail to [Julie.Munsell@mail.state.ar.us](mailto:Julie.Munsell@mail.state.ar.us) or  
[Ingrid.Green@mail.state.ar.us](mailto:Ingrid.Green@mail.state.ar.us). Send a fax to (501) 682-6836  
or call (501) 682-8650.